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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 294  
By Mumpower

A RESOLUTION To honor the memory of Joseph Wilmoth Rogers  
Lawson of Bristol.

WHEREAS, The members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Joseph Wilmoth Rogers Lawson; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Lawson was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, He was born in Elkins, West Virginia to Henry Thomas Lawson and Emma Katherine Wilmoth Lawson, who were tenant farmers; he was the seventh son in a family of 10 children; and

WHEREAS, Growing up in the Great Depression, Mr. Lawson worked his way through Berea College and graduated with honors from Marshall University in Huntington, West Virginia; years later, Milligan College awarded him an honorary Doctor of Letters; and

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WHEREAS, Joseph Wilmoth Rogers Lawson married Marguerite Eileen Fierbaugh during his sophomore year of college in 1933; after college, he worked as a farmer, selling his produce and eggs to support his family; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Lawson was hired by the First National Bank of Peterstown as an assistant cashier; later he moved to Princeton, where he worked as an insurance salesman; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lawson, with the advent of World War II, attempted to join the Army; due to a back injury, he was assigned to the U.S. Department of Labor as a compliance officer, a position in which he honorably served until 1944; and

WHEREAS, He is the meritorious founder of Southeastern Employers Service Corporation (SESCO Management Consultants), which was among the first management consulting firms in the United States specializing in human resource management systems and labor relations; and

WHEREAS, Interested in helping his community, Joseph Wilmoth Rogers Lawson ran for public office and was elected Mayor of Princeton; under his astute leadership, Princeton was able to pay off staggering debt; he was also instrumental in the formation of that town's "city manager" form of government; and

WHEREAS, An accomplished public servant and businessman, Joseph Lawson was recognized by the Junior Chamber of Commerce as an Outstanding Young Man; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lawson generously donated property to the Salvation Army for a new facility and personally led the campaign to raise funds necessary for its construction; the Salvation Army awarded him the honorary rank of Colonel and the Bronze Citation for his outstanding service; and

WHEREAS, An active and compassionate member of his community, he organized Princeton's first United Way and ably served as its president; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Wilmoth Rogers Lawson moved to Bristol, in 1957, where he continued his long standing tradition of community service; Mr. Lawson was actively involved in the Boys Club, the Greater Bristol Area Chamber of Commerce, Sullins Academy, Paramount

Foundation, and King College; a valuable member of the Bristol United Way Board for 20 years, he served as its president for two years; he was also a founding partner of *Hands On! Museum*, contributing over 100 wildlife specimens; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Lawson was also a member of the Sequoyah Council of Boy Scouts of America, serving as President for two terms; he was honored with the Silver Beaver Award for his admirable efforts on behalf of the Council; and

WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Lawson, in memory of Frances Elizabeth and David Thomas Lawson, their two children who had passed away, established a scholarship for needy students at King College; and

WHEREAS, Philanthropic individuals, they also founded the Lawson-Fierbaugh Foundation, which donates funds to charities and educational institutions in the Bristol region; most recently, Joseph and Marguerite Lawson's generosity made possible Sullins Academy's new 22-acre campus; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his life, Joseph Wilmoth Rogers Lawson distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to his community; and

WHEREAS, He was a lifelong member of Lions International, serving with distinction in numerous local offices, as district governor and as a member of the International Board of Directors during 1967, 1968, and 1969; he thereafter served as the Lion's Ambassador of Good Will to the World; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lawson served diligently as the Virginia State Necrology Chairman for over 45 years; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Lawson was a founding member of the Christian Science Society in Bristol and a life member of the Bristol Host Lions Club; and

WHEREAS, For his many accomplishments, he was inducted into the Wellmont Foundation Citizen Hall of Fame in 1995 and the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame in 1996; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Wilmoth Rogers Lawson was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, He will be greatly missed by his loving wife, Marguerite; surviving children, Joseph W.R. Lawson II and Joseph's wife Pat, Linda Lawson Heizer and Linda's husband Bill, Sara Sue Lawson, Matt and Sara's husband Frank, Philip J. Lawson and Philip's wife Neville, Larry F. Lawson, and Mark Lawson and Mark's wife Joyce; fifteen grandchildren; and thirteen great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, A highly respected member of his community, he was the epitome of kind neighbor and citizen; Mr. Lawson was a wonderful human being, loved by all who were privileged to have known him; and

WHEREAS, Joseph Lawson leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in business and public office, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, It is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor the memory of Joseph Wilmoth Rogers Lawson, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character, his stalwart commitment to his family and community, his numerous acts of kindness, and the courage and honor with which he served the citizens of this State.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Joseph Wilmoth Rogers Lawson.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

